



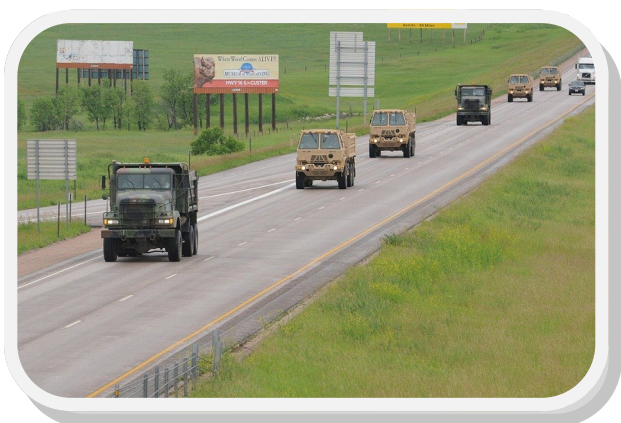
South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



GOVERNOR ACTIVATES NATIONAL GUARD TO ASSIST IN FLOOD AND STORM RESPONSE

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has activated more than 200 soldiers from the South Dakota National Guard to assist the state in disaster operations. 100 soldiers were sent to Wessington Springs to assist in the aftermath of the tornado that hit Wednesday evening.

More than 120 soldiers from the Guard have been assigned to assist state and local emergency management officials in response to the rise in water levels along the Big Sioux River.



The SDNG is currently moving personnel, dump trucks and support equipment to Union County to assist with levee construction. If required, the Guard may also help with rescue and evacuation, sandbagging and traffic control missions as well.

Gov. Daugaard declared a state of emergency and opened the State Emergency Operations Center early Tuesday morning. The EOC has been working with

SDNG officials to coordinate appropriate levels of response.

"The South Dakota National Guard is always willing to support our state in response to emergencies such as this," said Maj. Gen Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG. "In fact, it's one of the missions we're most proud of."

The SDNG responded to flooding in the Pierre/Fort Pierre and Dakota Dunes areas during the summer of 2011 with more than 1,900 soldiers and airmen providing personnel and resources for filling, transporting and distributing sandbags, levee construction, providing security and operating traffic control points, as well as helping stranded citizens threatened by flood waters.

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Heroes Among Us—showcasing 125 South Dakota veterans.



ACTING SECRETARY GIBSON INITIATES PROCESS TO SELECT NEW VETERANS HEALTH CHIEF

Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Sloan Gibson initiated the process of selecting the next head of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

"This is one of the most important jobs in government today," said Acting Secretary Gibson. "This is the largest integrated healthcare system in the country. We need a leader who will be a change agent and deliver necessary reforms to provide our Veterans timely access to the world-class healthcare they've earned and deserve. The expert panel we've assembled to recommend our new health chief understands the urgency and the seriousness of the task ahead, and I'm grateful for their efforts."



A commission comprised of nine healthcare experts and industry leaders will meet in Washington to assess a series of candidates to serve as the next Under Secretary for Health for the Veterans Health Administration. The commission includes:

- Nancy Adams, RN, Major General Retired, American Academy of Nursing Fellow
- Garry Augustine, Washington Headquarters Executive Director, Disabled American Veterans
- Delos Cosgrove, M.D., President and CEO, Cleveland Clinic
- Lt. General Patricia Horoho, Army Surgeon General and Commander, U.S Army Medical Command
- Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H., Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Population Health Improvement, University of California Davis Health System
- Jennifer Lee, M.D., Virginia Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services
- John E. Prescott, M.D., Chief Academic Officer, Association of American Medical Colleges
- Jose D. Riojas, Chief of Staff, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Bob Wallace, Executive Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars

PROGRESS AT STATE VETERANS HOME

Construction at the new Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home is in high gear. The majority of structural steel is done and several large concrete floors have been poured. We encourage you to view the Webcam (<http://www.truelook.com/clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/>) periodically to view how the project is progressing.



ACTING DIRECTOR TOURS 30TH ANNUAL GOLDEN COYOTE EXERCISE

Maj. Gen. Judd H. Lyons, acting director of the Army National Guard, visited Camp Rapid to tour the 30th annual Golden Coyote training exercise hosted by the South Dakota Army National Guard, June 11, in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Lyons, along with Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG, and other key leadership flew to some of the training locations for Golden Coyote to get an overview of operations and see the training in action.

"The way that the South Dakota National Guard has organized Golden Coyote offers several different opportunities for participating units," Lyons said. "A unit commander that participates has the opportunity to design his or her own training objectives and tap into some great training areas, support and support staff, which allows a commander to focus on his or her goals."

With the National Guard's dual mission of supporting both state governors in peacetime missions and reporting to the president in federal or wartime situations, being prepared for a wide variety of warrior tasks is essential.

Col. Tim Moran, SDNG deputy chief of staff of operations, said the Golden Coyote exercise has a unique theme that gives units an advantage when it comes to annual training.

"If I had to use one phrase I would use 'unsanitized environment,'" Moran said. "It's not scripted so that at 10 p.m. the opposition force will attack at this location with this many people; it's based on what the units want to train on in this unsanitized environment. You won't get that specialization at other events."

With the National Guard being better trained, equipped and more heavily relied upon than ever, providing quality training opportunities is vital to maintaining combat and support readiness for any scenario.

Lyons said in order to maintain this level of commitment it's vital to provide high quality-training events.

"We have to continue to offer these types of opportunities," said Lyons. "I believe home-station training is important; it definitely has a role, but in order for us to keep our Soldiers engaged in what they're doing we have to give them different opportunities in different locations to exercise their military occupational skills and collective training, and Golden Coyote is a great example of that."

According to Moran, visiting Golden Coyote may help Lyons and staff at National Guard Bureau in upcoming plans for training troops as deployments draw down and the Guard shifts to more stateside focused missions.

"(Lyons) got to see the capabilities of what this exercise brings to Guard units across the nation," Moran said. "He will do a mental assessment and it will help him make future decisions on how to train those units. Now he will know what Golden Coyote brings; especially in reference to using scarce resources and funding for units to be able to travel to this exercise."



STATE ELKS CONTINUE FUNDING FLAGS AT MEDAL OF HONOR MEMORIALS



Brian Theis, president of the South Dakota Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, presented an American flag to S.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Larry Zimmerman during Flag Day ceremonies Saturday evening, at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home in Hot Springs.

In connection with their pledge: "So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them," the State Elks Association provides an annual contribution to the Department to support the replacement of the flags at the Medal of Honor Memorials in South Dakota.

Secretary Zimmerman thanked Theis for the contribution the Elks Association makes to ensure that the American, South Dakota and Prisoner of War flags fly at the Medal of Honor Memorials. "We are pleased to have the State Elks Association as one of our great partners and appreciate that they have not forgotten the sacrifices these heroes made so that we may be free."

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. It is bestowed on a member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself "conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States."



Photo furnished by Curt Nettinga/Hot Springs Star.

HEROES AMONG US

Brookings native Orville "Orv" Smidt graduate from Brookings High School in 1961; enlisted in the Army National Guard' enrolled in ROTC; graduated from South Dakota State University; served as a career Army officer in the United States and abroad and returned to Brookings.

Like many career soldiers, Smidt didn't start out with a plan to wear Army green for 32 years and retire as a bird colonel. But a question from his mother-in-law-to-be who was secretary in the Army ROTC program at SDSU, put him on the path: "What are you going to do when you get out (of college)?"

From October 1968 to October 1969, Smidt was deployed in-country Vietnam. For the remainder of his three-decades plus career, Smidt served both in the United States and abroad—including three tours of duty in Germany. Since his military retirement, he has been active in politics and elective office: first working on campaigns for former Gov. Bill Janklow and then serving several terms in the South Dakota Legislature as a member of the state House of Representatives and state Senate.

Looking back to his combat tour in Vietnam in an air cavalry unit flying Huey helicopters, Smidt views it in the simple fashion that is part and parcel of what a professional soldier does. He explained, "When I committed to become an officer, I knew that part of what you do is if your country



calls, you go to war. I was perfectly ready and able to do that." "So it was pretty simple for me, really, I kind of knew I was going on; and I kind of knew if I took the ROTC program that I would eventually probably end up in Vietnam, because that's what was happening then." "It was just duty. You do what your country tells you to do when you make a decision to join."

Thank you Orv for your service to the state of South Dakota and this great country!!!!



(Information for this story was provided by John Kubal, Brookings Register)

“Serving those who served,” is what Operation RAV is all about. We walk among veterans every day and yet may not even realize the magnitude of their sacrifices to serve our country. We owe them so much and Operation RAV allows us to educate them on benefits and services and to say “thank you!”

An event hosted by Don Larson (Bennett County CVSO) brought many veteran partners to the table to assist Bennett County Veterans. Assisting Don with his open house in Martin were: Kevin Swanson, SDDVA Veterans Field Officer; Charlie Quinn Hughes, Stanley and Sully County VSO; Lynette Quinsaat, Shannon County VSO; Wendy Weakland, Fall River VSO; and Alton Adams, Oglala Sioux Tribal VSO.

To date, 19 counties have

Map of South Dakota showing county boundaries and names. The map is color-coded to represent water quality: blue for 'Good' and red for 'Poor'. A thick black line, likely representing the Missouri River, runs along the western border. The legend at the bottom indicates that counties with a blue background are 'Good' and counties with a red background are 'Poor'.

Counties labeled as 'Good' (blue background): Harding, Perkins, Corson, Campbell, McPherson, Marshall, Roberts, Brown, Edmunds, Faulk, Potter, Sully, Hyde, Hand, Spink, Clark, Codington, Deuel, Hamlin, Kingsbury, Brookings, Beadle, Stanley, Haskin, Jackson, Jones, Lyman, Buffalo, Jerauld, Sanborn, Miner, Lake, Moody, Aurora, Douglas, Hutchinson, Turner, Lincoln, Union, Clay, Yankton, Bon Homme, Gregory, Tripp, Todd, Bennett, Shannon, Fall River, Custer, Pennington, Lawrence, Meade, Dewey, Ziebach, Walworth, and Charles Mix.

Counties labeled as 'Poor' (red background): Butte, Lawrence, Pennington, Custer, Fall River, Shannon, Bennett, Todd, Tripp, Gregory, Lincoln, Union, Clay, Yankton, Bon Homme, Hutchinson, Turner, Lincoln, Union, Clay, Yankton, Bon Homme, Gregory, Tripp, Todd, Bennett, Shannon, Fall River, Custer, Pennington, Lawrence, Meade, Dewey, Ziebach, Walworth, and Charles Mix.

Counties Completed Operation RAV

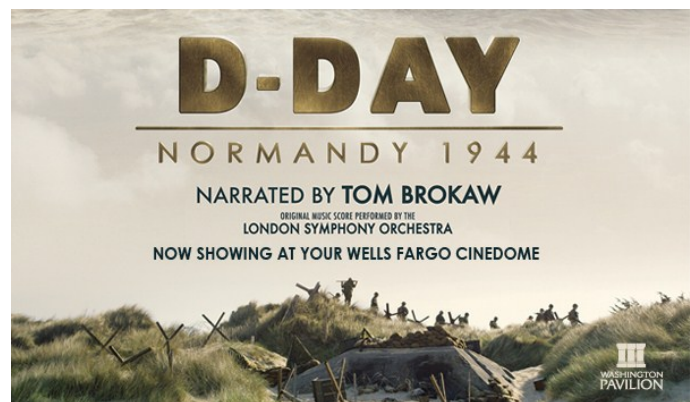
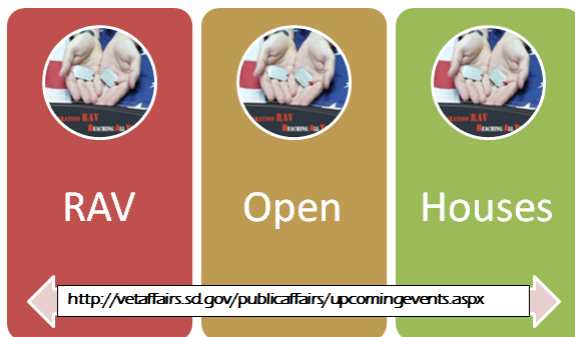
In addition to RAV phone calls and RAV open houses, Spink County VSO Gordon Richard, in conjunction with his local VFW post, is hosting a "Widows Benefit Luncheon." Another great way to educate our heroes spouses on services and programs available to the.

Again — “thank you” for your many accomplishments in “Reaching All our Veterans!”

Upcoming Events

2014

Jun. 20-22—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
 Jul. 7—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am
 Jul. 9—Brass Choir from the 147th Army Band will perform at SFVAHCS—CLC3
 Jul. 9—Patriotic Concert at the Veterans Memorial Park -147th Army Band will perform—7:00 pm
 Jul. 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am
 Aug. 6—DOL Veterans/Guardsmen/Reservists/Spouses Job Fair—Augustana College Elmen Center—10:00 am—2:00 pm
 Aug. 20—Annual SFVAHCS Show and Shine
 Aug. 22—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux City, IA
 Aug. 25-29—NACVSO Training Ramkota Hotel—Pierre
 Aug. 28 Chamber of Commerce Job Fair—American Legion Post—10:00 am
 Sept. 5—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Watertown
 Sept. 11—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Wagner
 Sept. 19—SFVAHCS Stand Down—Sioux Falls
 Oct. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—BHNC—9:00 am



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